

Building an Enduring Dialogue: The Army Environmental Center's Native American Cultural Resources Program

As the United States emerges from the Cold War and approaches the 21st century, the Department of the Army is assessing its activities to better meet the challenges presented by increasingly complex domestic environmental conditions. An integral part of this assessment is an emphasis on effectively addressing issues of concern to the Native Peoples of this nation while maintaining the world's foremost, combat-ready fighting force.

Responding to concerns expressed by Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians relating to environmental justice, free exercise of religion, self determination, and recognition of tribal sovereignty, Congress and the Executive Branch have, over the past three decades, created legislative and other mandates requiring federal agencies to address these issues. Of particular relevance to agencies with land management responsibilities are the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAGPRA), Presidential Memorandum dated April 29, 1994, "Government to Government Relations with Native American Tribal Governments," Executive Order 13007, "Indian Sacred Sites," dated May 24, 1996, and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended.

In redefining its relations with Native Peoples, the Army is a leader among federal agencies in addressing many of these concerns. The U.S. Army Environmental Center created its Native

American Cultural Resources Program in 1994 in an effort to address Native issues while, at the same time, allowing the Army to effectively use and manage its training lands.

The U.S. Army Environmental Center (USAEC) is a Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA) activity which supports the Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management. The USAEC's Native American program was begun as a centrally managed Army-wide effort to satisfy the summary and inventory requirements of Sections 5 and 6 of NAGPRA. USAEC developed a program to review Army collections and prepare draft compliance documents to help Army installations with the consultation and repatriation process. The St. Louis District Corps of Engineers, Mandatory Center of Expertise for the Management and Curation of Archeological Collections assisted the USAEC with the development and execution of the program.

The approach was two-phased. The first phase, completed in March 1996, identified the locations of archeological collections from all Army installations, prepared general summaries of collection contents, identified potential culturally affiliated Native American tribes or Native Hawaiian organizations, and drafted template compliance documents required by Section 6 of NAGPRA. This major undertaking resulted in the investigation of collections belonging to 169 installations. Of these, 97 were found to hold collections and received reports containing summary data. In total, some 37,737 archeological site records and 2,062 reports were reviewed.

In the second phase of the program, 20 installations were found to require Section 5 investigations. These included such facilities as Fort Sill, Oklahoma; Fort Benning, Georgia; Yakima Training Center, Washington; and Pohakuloa Training Area, Hawaii. Physical investigations confirmed the presence of human remains or funerary objects for 18 of the 20 locations. By August 1997, inventory reports containing the results of physical examination of the collections, more detailed information on potential affiliated groups and template compliance document drafts were completed. The majority of the affected installations have now begun consultation with federally recognized tribes and

*Medicine Bluff
Sacred Site, Fort
Sill, Oklahoma.*





Mr. Jefferson Keel, Administrator for the Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma, addresses the Army/Native Peoples Cultural Resources Workshop in Park City, Utah.

Hawaiian organizations in preparation for completing determinations of cultural affiliation and, ultimately, repatriating NAGPRA cultural items. This centrally managed and centrally funded approach to the Army's agencywide NAGPRA compliance documentation needs created a considerable cost savings through an economy of scale and also resulted in consistent, high quality report documentation in a standardized format.

An integral part of USAEC's efforts to address Native Peoples' issues is the complete revision of Army regulations and guidelines dealing with cultural resources management. Department of the Army Regulation (AR) 200-4 "Cultural Resources Management," provides Army installations with policy for implementing the government-to-government relationship with tribes required by the Presidential Memorandum of April 29, 1994. In addition, the new regulations give installations the direction to comply with Executive Order 13007, affording access to sacred sites and maintaining the integrity of those sites while concurrently using installation lands to develop a trained and battle-ready force.

Supplementing the new regulations are comprehensive Native American consultation guidelines. Army leaders recognized the importance of obtaining tribal input early in the regulation and guidance development process and of establishing an enduring dialogue with Native Peoples. Thus, in 1996 the Army invited interested tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations to attend a workshop at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Representatives of 14 tribes and three Native Hawaiian organizations attended along with Army personnel representing headquarters, installations, and Corps of Engineers districts. Native Peoples provided valuable information and recommendations on how the Army should go about consulting with them on the full range of cultural resources issues.



Mr. Kunani Nihipali, Po'o (Head), Hui Malama I Na Kapuna 'O Hawai'i Nei, discusses Native Hawaiian issues at the Army/Native Peoples Cultural Resources Workshop.

The Consultation Guidelines will be adopted as official Army guidelines in the upcoming Department of the Army Pamphlet (DA PAM) 200-4 *Cultural Resources Management*. The DA PAM 200-4 provides Army installations with guidelines for implementation of the policies in AR 200-4.

The success of the Fort Sill meeting led to a second, larger workshop held at Park City, Utah, in 1997. This forum brought together 150 representatives of Native Peoples groups and Army Headquarters and installation personnel. The focus of the meeting was on further refining the consultation guidelines, and included discussion on how the Army manages training areas and tribal reaction to the management process. It also cemented relationships established at Fort Sill and strengthened the Army's dialogue with Native Peoples. Of particular interest was the presentation of Army and Native Peoples' views on the identification of sacred sites and other traditional cultural properties and management of these special places within the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act and Executive Order 13007.

The USAEC is currently in the initial stages of drafting a counterpart to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) regulations, "Protection of Historic Properties" (36 CFR Part 800) that will stand in place of 36 CFR Part 800. The early and sustained involvement of tribes and Native Hawaiian groups is viewed as crucial to developing the Army's counterpart regulations. Regional meetings and other initiatives are being planned by the USAEC and the ACHP at this time to insure that the views of Native Peoples and other stakeholders are taken into account and fully integrated into this Army counterpart regulation.

Protection of cultural resources, particularly those which are important to Native Peoples, forms an important part of the Army's stewardship responsibility. Indeed, the preservation of Native Peoples' culture and respect for their sacred places are national priorities. The Army's Native American Program seeks to acknowledge the contributions of Native Peoples not only to the nation's past, but also to its future. Many challenges remain, especially in the area of ensuring access to sacred places while maintaining the Army's ability to train forces to fulfill its national defense responsibility. The mechanism is now in place and actions are underway to foster honest and enduring dialogue with Native Peoples.

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